

ii6           Luther's " Warning to the  
Germans."

warrior spirit burst out, too, in "The Warning to his dear Germans against the Recess of Augsburg" (1531). In this lengthy effusion he irrefragably assumes that, despite the condemnation of the majority of Augsburg, his religious views are absolutely right, and the views of his opponents are mere devil's falsities. He is very dogmatic as usual, but he also shows a noble hatred of the resort to violence in order to settle religious questions. To him the prospect of a religious war is a terrible prospect, and he bitterly reproaches the pope and the papists with the bloody violence which pope and priest have instigated throughout the ages for the purpose of enslaving the world to their false tyranny. Thus far he has counselled peace, but if the papists will have war and violence, so let it be. Let the worst come, as God will decide. The responsibility lies with them, not with him. He will not yield a hairbreadth before all the might of the emperor, even if it were backed by all the might of Sultan Soliman himself. These blind and bloodthirsty papists will, he is certain, come off second best in the struggle. God can raise up another Moses, another David, another Judas Maccabaeus, another Ziska, to teach the people how to win victories for His cause. In that case he will not, as formerly, raise his voice to prevent their castigation. Let the papists take all that they will get They will only richly deserve their fate. Resistance to such oppression is no rebellion. To resist force with force in such circumstances is now for Luther both a right and a duty, though he would not incite any one to begin the struggle. The papists decry every one as a rebel who will not submit to their dictation. He is the real rebel who takes the law into his own hands and oppresses others, as the papist bloodhounds now propose to do towards the Protestants. In this respect they are on the same footing as Thomas Miinzer.

If the emperor will lend himself as the tool of these bloodhounds, he simply forfeits his right to obedience, and no God-fearing man ought to obey him. " In such a case no man ought to obey the emperor, but should know that such obedience is absolutely forbidden by God, and that he who obeys is disobedient to God, and endangers his body and soul to all eternity. For the emperor acts in this case, not only against God and the divine law but against his own imperial